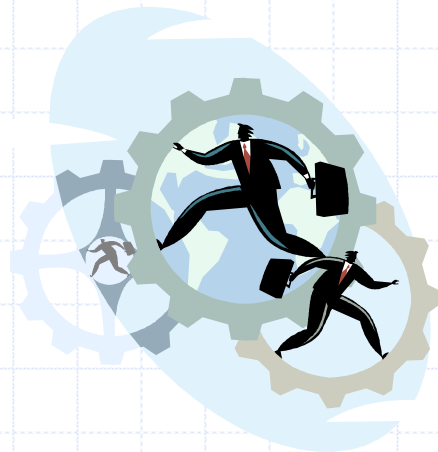


General Therapeutic Principles

◆ Thoughts from those in the Field



Utilizing an Accurate/ Current Evaluation

- ◆ In order to work effectively with an individual who has developmental disabilities, the therapist must pay attention to the individual's specific abilities.
- ◆ Interventions should be tailored to the unique communication and reasoning skills a client offers.
- ◆ Higher level articulation skills do not translate into comprehension.

Theory

- ◆ Various Counseling Theories were mentioned that provide a framework for the therapists work with the clients.
- ◆ Those mentioned include Adlerian, Cognitive Behavioral, Family Systems, Reality Therapy, and Solution Focused Brief Therapy.

Context of Behavior

- ◆ Behavior must be placed in the context of the environment.
- ◆ The therapist must analyze the physical needs such as eating, sleeping, etc. This may have a strong link to the behavior.

Structure

- ◆ Whether in individual or group therapy, having structure to the therapeutic interactions is important. Clients should understand their boundaries.
- ◆ Shorter more frequent sessions are needed for some clients. For example, they may need to meet twice a week for 25 minutes.

Therapeutic Relationship

- ◆ Rapport must be established.
- ◆ Client must understand the reason for seeing the therapist.
- ◆ Be cautious with promises, appointments, and commitments.
- ◆ Don't use "maybe".
- ◆ Canceling a session can cause behaviors.
- ◆ Humor can be effective, but be cautious when using humor.

Adaptations

- ◆ Communication with the client sometimes needs to be very literal and concrete. (Be sure the client understands the terminology being used.)
- ◆ Interactions involving visual activities (cards/cues) have been helpful with some individuals.
- ◆ Generalizing therapy can be a challenge, so therapists need to think of ways to do this.

Progress

- ◆ Can be very slow at times.
- ◆ Need to look at the overall picture of the client.
- ◆ Be sure to remember those successes that you have experienced.
- ◆ Give plenty of praise to the client and encourage staff to do so as well.

Goals

- ◆ Objectives for the client must be reasonable. For example, the first replacement activity may not be the best choice, but it may be better than the identified problem.
- ◆ At times it is helpful to have the client write their goals out and utilize this information from time to time and include replacement activities.
- ◆ Client's ability to attend to tasks may affect how the goals are approached.

Social Skills

- ◆ One of the more common areas of need in the Developmental Disabilities population is social skills.
- ◆ Many times it is important to teach these skills through teaching and modeling strategies.

Teaching Replacement Behaviors

- ◆ When teaching replacement behaviors, the instructions or steps may need to be repeated numerous times.
- ◆ Replacement behaviors should often involve one step only.

Play Therapy

- ◆ If the activity is interesting, it may be beneficial to the client.
- ◆ Try to tie in an activity in which the client enjoys.

Miscellaneous

- ◆ Visualizing a Stop Sign can help remind some individuals to change their behavior.
- ◆ What works with one client may not work with another.
- ◆ Contracts to remove themselves from stressful situations might be helpful (staff need to be trained).
- ◆ Encourage staff to fill up the clients day with positive activities.